Remarks/Arguments

According to the Office Action mailed on August 11, 2004, claims 1-39 are pending in this application. Applicants were requested to elect, for examination purposes, one of inventions I-XXX, listed on pages 2-4 of the Office Action. The Examiner noted that claims 1-2 and 12-15 are linking claims, which will be examined along with any elected Group I-VIII; claim 16 is a linking claim and will be examined along with any elected Group IX-XII; and claim 19 is a linking claim and will be examined along with any elected Group XVII-XXIV.

In addition, if one of Groups I-VIII is elected, Applicants were requested to elect a single specific inflammatory disorder.

The invention of Group VI (claims 7-11, drawn to a method of treating an inflammatory disorder with an immunoadhesin comprising the extracellular domain from within SEQ ID NO: 32), and the species of rheumatoid arthritis is hereby elected, with traverse.

Groups V-VIII concern methods of treating an inflammatory disorder with immunoadhesins comprising the extracellular domains of three different forms of the human STIgMA polypeptide, and its murine homolog:

Group V. SEQ ID NO: 2 - a 321 amino acids long huSTIgMA polypeptide encoded by DNA 40628;

Group VI. SEQ ID NO: 32 - a 399 amino acids long full-length huSTIgMA polypeptide.

Group VII. SEQ ID NO: 33 - a 305 amino acids long "short form" of huSTIgMA polypeptide.

Group VIII. SEQ ID NO: 34 - the 280 amino acids long muSTIgMA polypeptide.

The sequences of all four polypeptides are closely related. Thus, for example, SEQ ID NO: 2 is identical with SEQ ID NO: 32, but for 78 missing C-terminal amino acids. The sequence identity of the huSTigMA polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 32 and the "short form" of SEQ ID NO: 33 is apparent from the alignment provided in Figure 56, which clearly shows that the two sequences are identical but for a deletion of amino acid positions 139-231 of SEQ ID NO: 33, in the shorter sequence, and an L→H point mutation at position 138. The same figure also shows the high degree of sequence similarity between the human and murine sequences. In view

of this, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdrawn the restrictions requirement between Groups V-VIII. For the same reasons, Groups I-IV, IX-XII, XIII-XVI, XVII-XX, XXI-XXIV, XXV-XXVII, and XXVIII-XXX should be combined, and examined in one application.

The present application is believed to be in *prima facie* condition for allowance, and an early action to that effect is respectfully solicited.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-1641 (Attorney Docket No.: 39766-0100P1).

Respectfully submitted,

Date: February 10, 2005

Ginger R. Dreger
Reg. No. 33, 055

HELLER EHRMAN WHITE & McAULIFFE LLP
Customer No. 25213
275 Middlefield Road
Menlo Park, California 94025
Telephone: (650) 324-7000
Facsimile: (650) 324-0638

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